

## General Safety Tips For Home Heating

Each year in the United States, an estimated 2,000 people receive hospital emergency room care for burn injuries due to contact with hot surfaces of space heaters. About 600 people die each year in fires that began with the careless use of space heaters. In addition, more than 100 people are killed annually by non-fire related carbon monoxide poisoning caused by improper operation of space heaters. For higher levels of safety when using space heaters, follow these rules:

- Keep a fire extinguisher handy and know how to use it.
- Follow all instructions regarding proper installation and operation of your heater.
- Teach young children to stay away from heaters. Place a protective cage around the heater if you have pets or very small children.
- Turn off the heater when you go to sleep, when you leave the room, and when you are not available to supervise your children.
- Plan and practice exit drills in case of a fire. Know "Two Ways Out" of every room in your home, and teach everyone in your family to "Stop, Drop and Roll" - a simple but effective technique for extinguishing clothing which has caught fire.

For more information about portable heater safety, "Stop, Drop and Roll," or any other aspect of fire safety, contact your local fire department.



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
Christine Todd Whitman  
Governor

Department Of

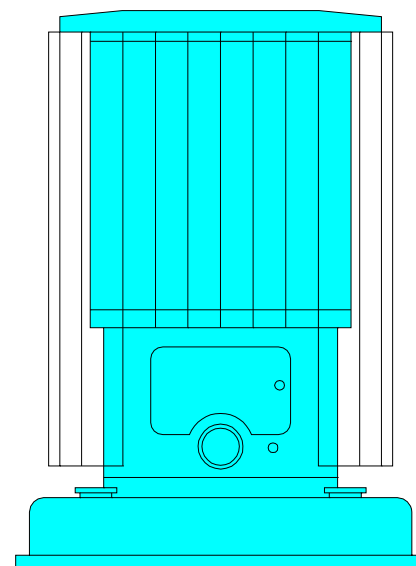


Community  
Affairs

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
Jane M. Kenny  
Commissioner

*For more information about  
fire safety, contact your local  
Fire Department.*

# Space Heater Safety



DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY  
William H. Cane, Director

## Using a Portable Heater? Be Careful, and Install a Detector or Two

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that every year, more than 100,000 residential fires are associated with the use of room (space) heaters. As fuel prices rise each year, more and more people are purchasing space heaters to supplement or serve as backups to main heating systems. As the use of these heaters increases, so does the potential for hazard. Small children, in particular, run the risk of being burned by the hot surfaces of portable heaters, but everyone is exposed to additional dangers when these heaters are used. So if you are one of the users of a device variously described as a "space heater," "room heater," "auxiliary heater," "area heater" or "portable heater," you'll be safer as well as warmer if you take the time to install a smoke detector in the room in which your supplementary heater is used. And if you use a heater that consumes fuel, such as a kerosene heater or a wood- or coal-burning stove, you should know that ***fuel-fired heaters pose the additional threat of carbon monoxide poisoning, and should be used only in conjunction with a smoke detector AND a carbon monoxide detector.***

Of the most common types of space heaters (kerosene, electric, coal and wood stoves), radiant electric heaters with no exposed heating elements are the least risky to use. Their surface temperatures are lower, and they pose none of the risks of carbon monoxide poisoning associated with fuel-fired portable heaters.

The following are tips for using specific types of portable heaters:

### Kerosene Heaters

Kerosene heaters are illegal in all but one- and two-family homes in New Jersey, and are completely banned in some communities. ***Use kerosene heaters only where approved by local authorities.*** But even if your municipality permits the use of kerosene heaters, remember that they can still be extremely dangerous if not used correctly. If you must use one, be sure to carefully observe the following safety rules:

- Use only clear (1-K) kerosene. Never use gasoline or any other substitute fuel; be sure that the wick is set at the recommended height, and the room is adequately ventilated. Store kerosene outdoors, in approved containers clearly marked "Kerosene." Always refill the fuel tank outside, and turn off the heater and let it cool before refilling. (Fuel hitting a hot surface could ignite.) Fill only until the fuel gauge indicates "full."
- Avoid direct contact with the heater. Use a protective cage to prevent children and pets from coming into contact with the heater.
- Never use any heater to heat food or water, or to dry wet clothing, and never move it while it's in use.

### Wood & Coal Stoves

Wood and coal stoves can be warm, comfortable and economical, but they can also be dangerous if used incorrectly. Prior to having a wood or coal stove installed, first obtain an installation permit from your local construction official. Then secure the services of a qualified installer. Don't try to do this job yourself.

Follow these rules when using wood or coal stoves:

- Use only coal in coal stoves, and only seasoned wood in wood stoves. Avoid overloading.
- Store fuel at a safe distance from the stove.
- Don't use lighter fluid or other flammable liquids to help start the fire.
- Place ashes in a suitable metal container and take outdoors immediately.
- Always use a fire screen and keep the stove door closed. Have stove, ductwork and chimney cleaned annually.

### Electric Heaters

- Don't purchase an electric heater unless it bears the label of an independent testing laboratory, has a tipover switch that will shut off the current if the unit is knocked over, and has a wire grill to keep fingers and flammables away from heating elements.
- Position the unit away from all flammable materials such as curtains, drapes, newspapers, shag rugs and furniture.
- Keep the heater away from water, and never touch it if you're wet.
- Be sure the plug of the electrical cord fits snugly into the outlet. A loose plug can overheat.
- Because electric heaters draw considerable power, the cord and plug may generate heat. If the cord or plug feels hot to the touch, shut off the heater and unplug it.